

Religion and Social Mobility: A Historical Study of Neovaishnavism of Srimanta Shankardeva

Authors : Satyajit Kalita

Abstract : Assam from an early period has gone through various religious transformations and has witnessed its impact in different period. One of such epoch is the epoch of Srimanta Shankardeva. Srimanta Shankareva is regarded, as the greatest religious preacher and social reformer in the history of Assam. It was Shankardeva, who brought the faith of vaisnavite movement that prevailed in other parts of India. Before and during his time, the people of Assam were followers of Sakta worship, the worshipping of different gods and goddesses. People worshiped idols and offered sacrifices. Srimanta Shankardeva under the faith neo-vaishnavism and propagated the Eka-Saran-Naam-Dharm, through which spread the splendor of one and only Lord Vishnu or Krishna and abolished offering sacrifices. With the help of Eka-Saran-Naam-Dharma, Srimanta Shankardeva tries to vanish the superstitious beliefs and irrational practices of Assamese society. The NeoVaishnavite faith developed a democratic outlook which permeates the entire teachings and practices in Assamese people. His contributions not only made the foundations of Assamese literature, culture, and social structure but also established the super structures the upon. It is understood that all contributions of Srimanta Shankardeva bear his marks distinctively. Religion is said to be biggest and the most influential aspect in bringing about change in the society. In Assam, with the essence of neo-vaishnavism by Shankardeva and the emergence of the Eka-Saran-Naam-Dharma came into a huge Change to the region. The movement of religion brought about a social mobility to all sections of society. This paper is a mere initiative to look into the organizational structure of Srimanta Shankardeva Sangha and its maintenance of the ideology and principles without failure. It is aimed to examine the assimilation of different groups and communities of people under the fold of Srimanta Shankardeva Sangha.

Keywords : Neo-Vaishnavism, Srimanta Shankardeva, Srimanta Shankardeva Shangha, Eka-Saran-Naam-Dharma

Conference Title : ICPR 2018 : International Conference on Philosophy of Religion

Conference Location : Mumbai, India

Conference Dates : February 22-23, 2018